

Frame Design

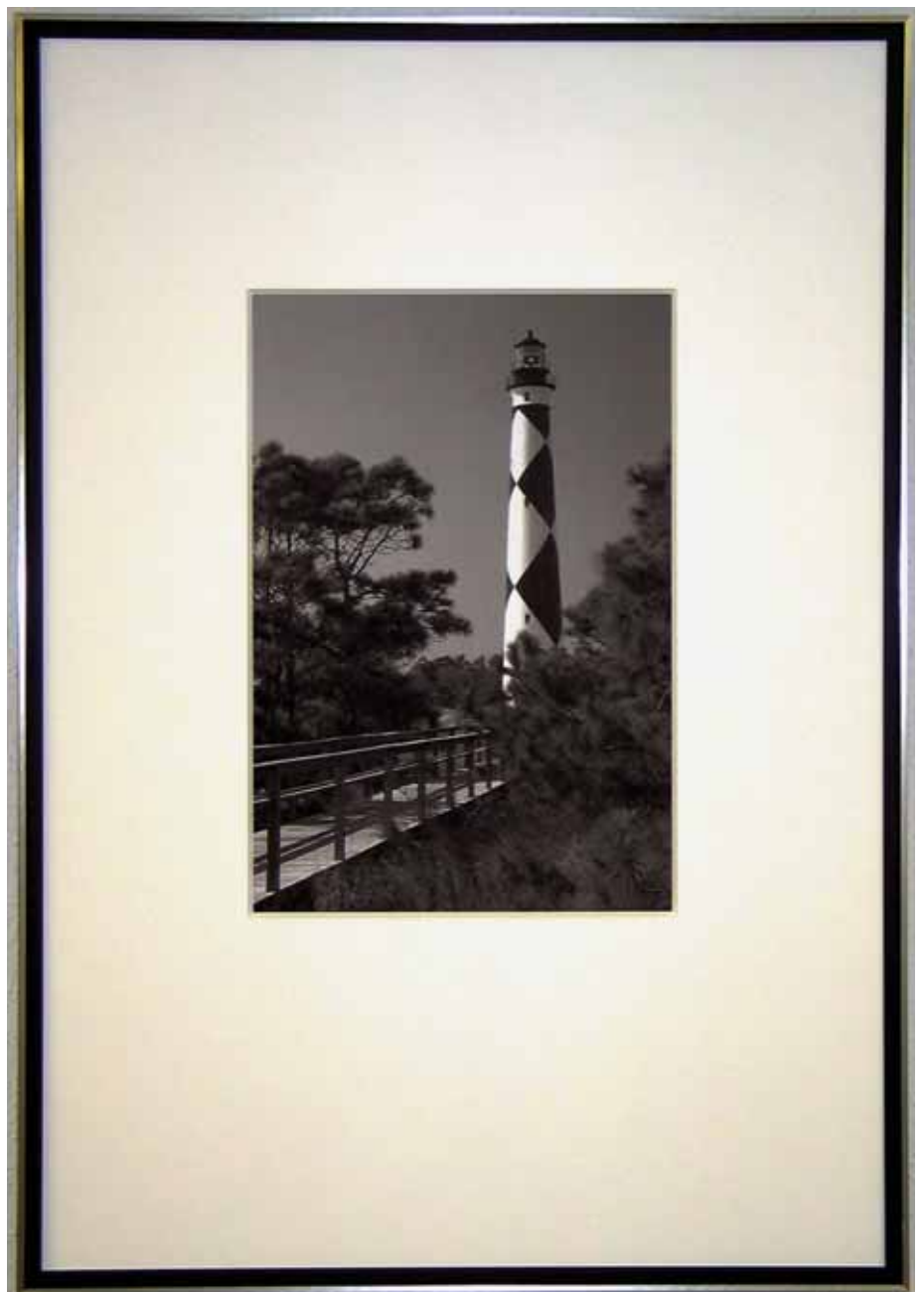
by Tim Franer, CPF, CMG

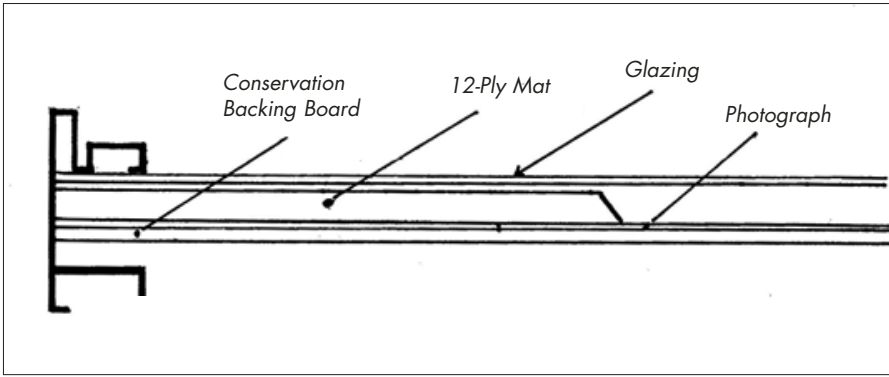
Form & Function

Balance & Proportion

The frame design for this original black and white photograph, “Cape Lookout on the North Carolina Coast” by David M. Futrell, illustrates the current trend directions toward cleaner, simpler lines in framed artwork. This particular example emphasizes certain elements of design as well: the fact that the moulding should always be a different width than the mat borders, and that mat and frame together should create a sense of balance, complementing the subject matter rather than competing with it.

The purpose of the mat is, first, to separate the glazing from the artwork, and to help create balanced and proper proportions in the design to enhance the overall appearance of the artwork. A wider mat will give the subject breathing space and helps to balance and direct attention to the artwork.





Cross-section illustration of the elements in this framing package. (Matboard is a Bainbridge Alpharag; moulding is Nielsen Echelon, profile #30.)

In this example, the photograph dictated a certain element of the matting proportions. The top mat border measures 8" wide, the side borders are 7" each, and the bottom mat border has a width of 12". The overall dimensions of the piece are 24"x36".

The Thought Process

In cases where the subject matter of the artwork appears to be evenly balanced, an even mat border all around works best most of the time. I find that artwork that appears unbalanced, however, looks best with differing mat proportions. The photograph seen on the previous page has an elongated feeling due to the vertical, off-center lighthouse.

I chose to use a narrow side border on the mat to balance the long, narrow lighthouse. The top border for the mat needed to be wider than the side borders because the image of the lighthouse is very close to the top edge of the photo. When I extended the top mat in this way, it gave the image more room to breathe. The bottom mat border is weighted to help support the length of the subject.

To further enhance the matting, I used a 12-ply white matboard. This created a wonderful customized look, in comparison to a standard single or double mat. Using a 12-ply mat added a new dimension to the presentation—literally.

The practice of creating depth in framing designs—through techniques using foamboard, spacers, fillets, bevel accents, and deep mouldings—are very popular today. This kind of design element adds dimension that gives your framed artwork a customized enhancement while keeping the overall look clean and uncluttered.

For the moulding on this piece, I chose a brushed metal style with a black panel. The clean, simple line of this moulding created balanced and proper propor-

tions between the photograph, the matting, and frame.

My awareness of the trend toward clean and simple elements was reinforced last spring when I attended the Spring International Home Furnishings Market in High Point, NC. Staying abreast of all the design elements and trend components on the market enables you to present your customers with framing that's the best it can be. This will add value (both perceived and actual) to the finished piece and shows your customer the creative talents that separate you from your competitor. Above all, these added components will increase your ticket and bottom line profits. ■



Here, you see a corner detail of the frame. The 12-ply bevel used in this design brought the matting to a new level, adding more depth for the viewer to appreciate.

Tim Franer, CPF, CMG, has spent more than 30 years in the art and custom framing industry. Known for his creative design and skilled craftsmanship, Tim is a former gallery owner and is currently a chairholder with the Color Marketing Group. He is currently development, design, and educational consultant for Nielsen Bainbridge.

